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## Time to tackle inequality by raising the minimum wage

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) will today continue its fight for a \$30 a week increase to the minimum wage at the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review.

The Government and industry groups have continued their opposition to the increase.

On the ABC's Q&A panel on Monday night, Australia witnessed how out of touch Mr Turnbull's government is, with Assistant Treasurer Kelly O'Dwyer callously dismissing a worker who described his struggle to raise a family on the minimum wage.

Ms O'Dwyer's comments about the Budget, including an example of how company tax cuts would allow a café owner to purchase a \$6,000 toaster that would magically create jobs and improve wages, illustrated the Turnbull government's continuing adherence to out-dated economic ideologies.

A \$30 a week increase to the minimum wage would see hard working low income workers receive \$18.08 per hour, or \$686.90 per week, up from the current rate of \$17.29 per hour.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"Raising the minimum wage by just \$30 would have a significant impact on the lives of low income workers."

"By failing to support the \$30 per week wage rise, the Government is backing away rather than reaching out to ordinary Australians who rely on the minimum wage to support themselves and their families."

"The government should be trying to reduce inequality by supporting an increase to the minimum wage but instead we see them undermining low paid workers with their \$4 an hour PaTH internship program."

"Australia's lowest paid workers got nothing from the Budget, except cuts to health, education and other essential services."

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### Key facts on minimum wage earners

- There are 1.86 million Australians who earn the minimum wage - that's nearly one in five workers.
- Minimum wage workers are mostly women (57.5 per cent) and are typically younger than the workforce as a whole (average age of minimum wage worker is 35.7 while average age of all workers is 39.5).
- More than one million minimum wage workers come from just three occupations: community/personal service workers, sales workers and labourers.
- Over half of all hospitality workers, cleaners and laundry workers are reliant on the minimum wage.
- Compared to all workers, minimum wage workers are more likely to work part time or be casual.